

# Technician Commitment Action Plan 2024-2026

## Introduction

Newcastle University's Technician Commitment Action Plan 2024-2026 builds on the successes of delivering the previous plan and ensures that the initiatives are more integrated with existing university activities towards the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, our EDI Strategy and our Research Culture Action Plan.

This Action Plan responds to what our technical community have said. A technicians' networking event was held in June 2023 and a third of the technical community attended. Discussion groups and a subsequent online survey provided feedback that has been pivotal in its' development. Additionally, a joint technicians networking event was held in October 2023 with technicians from both Newcastle and Northumbria University and feedback from that event has also been incorporated into the action plan.

The action plan also reflects changes in the HE landscape since 2020, such as the establishment of MI TALENT, the Policy Commission recommendations 2022, and an increasing emphasis from UKRI and other funders in recognising and supporting technical colleagues through a focus on people and teams.

The action plan primarily focusses on the **people** in our technical community and the need to improve further the communication of technician led activity across the organisation which will in turn increase the visibility and recognition of the endeavours of our technical colleagues within the university eco-system. We need to understand more about what recognition looks like for diverse technical roles and put that into practice. Opportunities to develop skills within the main domains of **Research** and **Education**, or where these intersect, are also recognised. We are also trying to support skills development to improve the economic benefit of the Northeast and improve the recruitment pipeline into technical roles in the University and across the region. This **external engagement** lends itself to several new opportunities including partnering with technical communities at other northeast universities (Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside) to improve the public perception of universities as employers of local talent and to nurture the development of future talent, through a more joined up delivery of T-level placements for young people.

# Our People: Visibility, Recognition, Communication and Engagement, Networking, and Team Working

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Measurable Outcome	Priority in year 1 (High) - 3)
<b>Review the organisation and management of the actions within the Technician Commitment action plan</b>	Map out an organogram linking the work-stream to those with responsibilities for actioning elements of this action plan to ensure initiatives are sufficiently resourced.	TC steering group / TC lead OD lead	2024	It is clear who is working on which actions and that they have sufficient resources	1
<b>Ensure that all technical colleagues are aware of the current NU Technician Commitment action plan.</b>	Information about the Technician Commitment action plan forms part of the induction slide deck presented at the University's Welcome Event (part of the induction and settling in process for all new colleagues).	OD	2024	Increase visibility and engagement of new starters from outside the University	2
	Hold a minimum of 1 event per year to update technicians and key stakeholders on the progress of the Technician Commitment action plan at Newcastle University.	TC lead	ALL	The event to update colleagues happens  Technicians are aware of progress on the TC Action Plan	3
	Establish a relationship with Faculty communications teams as they have access to established communications channels.	Faculty comms Teams	2024	Faculty Communications teams are engaged and assist with technician relevant communications across the organisation	1
<b>Increase the visibility of and engagement of Technicians with NU TechNet</b>	Build sustainable online presence and engagement for NU TechNet through improving internal web presence and Teams pages.	TechNet Organising Committee	2024	Increased hits on SharePoint pages, increasing activity/use of a Team page	2
	Information about the Technicians network forms part of the induction slide deck presented at the University's Welcome Event (part of the induction process for all new colleagues).	OD	2024	Increase visibility and engagement of new starters from outside the University	2
	Increase the reach of NU TechNet by considering the inclusion of colleagues that are positioned outside of academic units in technician led activity (e.g., IT and data specialists).	TechNet Organising Committee	2025	Inviting colleagues who are positioned outside of academic units to TechNet events  Post-event formulation of a clear plan to include these colleagues	2

	Ensure that Technicians are effectively embedded into the activities arising from NU policies around EDI, Wellbeing and Mental Health	Technical managers	2025	Technicians are members of relevant EDI committees and provide bi-lateral feedback to technicians' network	2
<b>Increase the visibility of and increasing the recognition of contributions made by technicians</b>	Ensure managers and team leads use internal reward schemes to recognise appropriate contributions	Technical managers/leads and team leads	Annually	Data from People Services shows that there is a diverse range of applications from across the organisation	1
	A person is identified in each Faculty to have oversight for Technical HESA data. Training on relevant HESA data delivered to all nominated individuals.  Access to a system to capture data on teaching qualifications and number of hours teaching time	People Services / OD	2024	HESA data on technical colleagues is reviewed annually in each Faculty and forwarded to People Services for a central return to HESA by Newcastle University	2
	Ensure the Technical Expertise brochure is updated annually and done in synergy with other material from Faculty Facilities	T&F group	Annually	Brochure showing technical expertise is published annually.	2
	Heads of Infrastructure and technical managers to formulate a co-ordinated approach to target appropriate external awards.  Ensure that technical managers consider these opportunities and put forward nominations where appropriate.	Heads of Infrastructure, Faculty Technical manager/ leads	Annually	At least one technician per year is nominated for the outstanding technician THE awards.	1
	Create a Task and Finish group to co-create an admin-light system for harvesting content that is relevant for the technician web pages.	T&F group	2025	Content to include details of: Technician led funding awards and technician membership of UKRI panels and other similar successes. Technical representation on relevant committees. Case studies of technicians and promote technical careers at Newcastle University.	1
	Ensure that Technicians are effectively embedded into the activities arising from NU policies around EDI, Wellbeing and Mental Health	Technical Managers	2025	Technicians are members of relevant EDI committees and provide bi-lateral feedback to technicians' networks	2
<b>Enhance Career pathways and development opportunities for Technicians</b>	Continue to communicate the opportunity for all Technical Staff to gain Professional Registration with an appropriate professional body and the benefits this will bring Work with Professional Bodies to provide a minimum of one professional registration workshop per year to support applications for professional registration	TC lead	2024	Professional registration is promoted across NU  One professional registration workshop delivered per year	3
	Support People Services in the review of the technical progression pathway and assess the opportunity to	People Services	2025	The Technical Career Pathway is reviewed, and Technicians are engaged and involved	1

	use the technicians' job family as a pilot area for a new career framework approach.				
	Explore if an institutional strategic technical lead is required at NU and if not ensure that the governance and management structures are put in place to give oversight of technician led activity.	Faculty Technical leads, People Services, Directors of Faculty Operations	2025	There is oversight and join-up of technician led activity  Technicians across the university have a similar experiences and opportunities	1
	Through "Conversation and Priorities" ensure that technicians are offered appropriate training opportunities	Line managers	2025	A broad range of training opportunities are explored during Conversation and Priorities styled meetings with line managers.  Technicians utilise the 10 days professional development (Pro Rata) allocated to them, and they make this visible using the annual leave system.  Increase the number of technicians participating as mentors and mentees in the NU Mentoring Scheme  Promote the 'Starter for 10' initiative and ensure that technical colleagues feel included in this initiative	2
	Develop clear guidance for the technical community about how development opportunities can be financially supported both internally and externally. (including Research Culture People fund, TC Funds, HEaTED vouchers, faculty awards)	Technical Managers and RC team	2025	Technicians in any role know the mechanism to use if they find a training opportunity and want resource to pursue it - this understanding can be checked via survey/polling/ technical manager ad hoc questioning.	3
	Develop a deeper understanding of technical skills and identify any gaps in technician led processes.  Commission a Skills, Roles and Responsibilities Audit like that done in 2019 by the NTDC to understand any gaps at a process level and establish if the workforce can become more agile by addressing those gaps	TC Steering group	2026	Endeavour to understand any gaps at a process level and establish if the workforce can become more agile by addressing those gaps	2
	Work with The Research Space to ensure opportunities for technicians to participate in relevant training is inclusive (receiving and delivering)	OD	2026	Ensure Technical Colleagues can access PROSPER to either (i) enhance their career aspirations or (ii) contribute to PROSPER to promote technical careers to postdocs  At least two Technician led training activities delivered through The Research Space per year	3

# Research for discovery and impact: Catalysing transformative research within and between disciplines

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Measurable Outcome	Priority in year 1 (High) - 3)
<p><b>Ensure that Technical Staff are embedded within appropriate research culture workstreams and initiatives</b></p>	<p>Promote The Research Culture <b>project fund</b> through email, teams and at meetings so that all Technicians are aware they can apply to the project fund to deliver innovative and experimental projects and activities that are in line with The Research Culture Action Plan</p> <p>Create opportunities to promote research culture activities at technician focussed events</p>	<p>Technical Managers / Research Culture Team</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>A technical representative is included in The Research Culture (RC) Governance and Management structure</p> <p>The awards to technicians from the Enhancing Research Culture QR funding (people and project) are clearly visible.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Ensure that Technicians and their managers are aware of, are trained and act in accordance with, the highest standards of <b>research integrity</b></p> <p>Promote the developing network of institutional and local research integrity champions to facilitate and support take-up of good research practices</p> <p>Ensure The Research Integrity and Governance manager is engaged and involved with the technical community</p>	<p>Research Culture team / Technical Managers</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Technicians participate and engage in The Research Integrity training offered and The Research Integrity Champions engage with Technical Colleagues</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><b>Encourage appropriate inclusion of technical staff as authors, co-authors, or contributors on published papers and presentations</b></p>	<p>Communicate the NU <b>authorship guidelines</b> published in 2022 widely so that academic and technical colleagues are aware of the details and technical colleagues feel empowered to seek authorship credits where appropriate</p> <p>Promote the consistent use of ORCID and CRediT across the technical community</p> <p>Showcase individual success such as research outputs, grant awards and membership of Research Council Panels plus other successes on the technician web pages so that the contributions made by individual technicians are visible and those who are successful can act as champions</p>	<p>RC team, Technical managers</p> <p>EDI interns</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Signposting to authorship guidelines is clear</p> <p>Instructions on how to use register for ORCID and CRediT are accessible to all in the technical community</p> <p>Review the University's publication and data repository for a % increase in CRediT uptake</p> <p>Successes in grant awards and panel membership are visible</p>	<p>2</p>



<p><b>Ensure that the technical facilities are integrated into faculty research strategy and promoted appropriately</b></p>	<p>The <b>funding mechanism to support technical facilities</b> should be reviewed to ensure its fit for purpose and allows them to develop technology / applications for the future and be competitive in the service offered to researchers</p> <p>Capabilities of the Facilities are promoted internally and externally to ensure they provide access to as many researchers as possible</p>	<p>Technical Facility leads in Faculty and Deans of R&amp;I</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>The facilities are operated within a robust financial framework and are marketed internally and externally</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Provide transparent guidelines for how technical staff should be costed on grants, sharing examples of best practice.</b></p>	<p>Create a multi stakeholder Task and Finish group to provide transparent guidelines on <b>costing technical colleagues and technical services onto grants.</b></p> <p>Broaden membership of the NU Peer Review College to include technical colleagues'</p>	<p>Pre award Team People Services</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Guidance on how technicians should be costed on grants is published internally and is easy to access</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Encourage technician led applications for external funding applications where appropriate and where funding bodies allow</b></p>	<p>People Services to clarify to all units the process that permits employees on <b>PS contracts to undertake PI or CI roles</b></p> <p>Pre award team engaged and involved in discussions to facilitate applications from technical colleagues</p> <p>Increase awareness of funding opportunities by regularly promoting relevant funding opportunities across the technical community. Clarify the process of applying for grants so that it is accessible and inclusive to technical colleagues</p> <p>Ensure technical colleagues applying for grants have sufficient support (including time to do this) and have access to training especially training in writing grants.</p> <p>Establish a Grant Writing Special Interest Group (SIG)</p>	<p>People Services, Pre award team Facility leads</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>The process for applying for technician led research funding (as PI or CI) is clear</p> <p>Support from SIG and pre award team is in place throughout their application for external funding</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Ensure technicians are included and embedded within research structures</b></p>	<p>Technicians invited to join and contribute to relevant themes such as <b>Innovation Methods and Applications</b> (IMA) in FMS</p>	<p>TechNet Committee / technical managers / theme leads</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Ensure that the engagement of and engagement from technical staff with the IMA theme is sustained over time</p> <p>Grow Technician membership of the IMA "Special Interest Group" (SIGs).</p>	<p>2</p>
	<p>Technicians invited to join and contribute to relevant <b>Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence</b> (NUCoRE). Promote opportunities for cross-disciplinary thinking that already exist (e.g., Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence (NUCoRE)s, research centres</p>	<p>Deans of R&amp;I / NUCoRE leads / Technical Managers</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>Ensure technical colleagues who are embedded within NU cores activities are visible and their contribution recognised</p>	<p>3</p>

	and institutes, special interest groups, academies, seminars) via induction and researcher networks. Be clear on what is on offer and how researchers can get involved and create a welcoming environment for researchers.				
<b>Include technicians within the preparations for REF 2029</b>	Through Deans of Research and Innovation, Technical Manager teams and external bodies like UK-ITSS ensure that technicians are engaged and involved in preparations for NU submission to REF 2029.	Deans or R&I, Technical Managers	2026	Outputs and impacts to which technicians have contributed are considered for submission to the REF (under its proposed new provision for contributions from 'research-enabling staff') and  Technician led contributions to research environment and culture are documented.	1

## Education for life: Engaging, challenging and supporting students to discover and fulfil their potential

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Measurable Outcome	Priority in year 1 (High) - 3)
<b>Raise visibility around direct contributions to learner outcomes</b>	Officially identify <b>technician contributions</b> within module frameworks  Ensure this information is visible on technicians' webpages	Technical managers	2024	The teaching contribution made by technicians to modules is known, visible on webpage and forms part of the data submitted to HESA	1
	Students to have increased awareness and appreciation of Technical Staff roles by making it clear that technicians (a) Feature in the Prospectus and <b>Module Frameworks</b> (b) Showcase technical expertise at <b>open days</b>	Deans of Education / Technical Managers	2024	Technical colleagues are visible in Prospectus or Module frameworks  Technical colleagues are invited to showcase their activity on open days and /or outreach events	2
	Increase <b>technician contributions</b> to the delivery of CPD programmes  Develop a programme of <b>technician-led workshops</b> accessible for internal and external attendees.	Technical Managers/LLA Hub	2026	Increase in technicians with Advanced HE Accreditation capable of delivering CPD Implementation of CPD programme that is advertised internally and externally with workshops delivered by Technicians	1
<b>Ensure that technicians are recognised and</b>	Promote <b>Advance HE accreditation</b> for technicians who teach or demonstrate	Technical Managers	2024	Advance HE Accreditation is promoted across technical networks	1

<b>rewarded for their contribution to teaching</b>	Facilitate Shadowing and sharing of best practice  Work with the Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS) to capture data on technicians who are submitting for fellowship/associateship and deliver support for technicians who wish to obtain Advance HE accreditation			Best practice is shared as part of a reflective HE application and raises visibility Technicians who have achieved accreditation are visible on the website  Data is available from LTDS to track the success year on year with respect to numbers of applicants and their level	
	Explore with People Services if <b>technical expert</b> role to recognise technicians who use specialist knowledge and pedagogic practice to support teaching programmes. Develop a framework to identify diverse roles and responsibilities that support the student academic journey  Secondment opportunities and/or exchanges between teaching and research environments, including School X	Technical managers / People Services	2025	Technicians with teaching roles are identified, supported in their development and their contribution is recognised  For those with teaching roles, recognition, and reward for the contribution to education has parity with those who contribute to research	1
<b>Collate real examples of Technical Staff driven pedagogy</b>	Capture evidence where technical colleagues have driven teaching/new methodologies which impacts on delivery/curriculum	Technical managers	2025	Example(s) of technician led pedagogy visible on a digital platform	2
<b>Ensuring technicians are suitably trained to support students and colleagues</b>	Technicians given opportunity for <b>Mental Health First Aid Training</b> and contribute to the institutional wellbeing agenda for both students and colleagues	People Services EDI team	2026	A clear framework and network providing training to technicians in mental health first aid and subsequently able to support staff and students	2

## Engagement for economic and societal benefit: Making a difference locally, nationally and internationally

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Measurable outcome	Priority in year 1 (High) - 3)
<b>Further the ambition to establish closer links to technical communities in the other North East</b>	Lead on <b>regional technical development</b> opportunities by:	OD / Technical managers	2024	A greater understanding of the development needs across the region and a willingness to work together to explore solutions.	2



<b>universities to create training opportunities</b>	<p>Exploring with MI Talent to see if there is a delivery model for their technician focussed training courses in the northeast region</p> <p>Explore with other NE universities what training and development opportunities could be shared</p>				
<b>Expand entry routes to technical roles and careers and showcase technical careers to young people in the local community.</b>	<p>Host industry <b>placements (45 days) for T-Level</b> qualifications and work experience placements for local schools and colleges.</p>	<p>Chameleon BIP team, People Services, Technical Managers</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Establish a clear understanding of how the university could position itself to offer 45 day industrial placements to T-levels</p> <p>Offer a minimum of two industrial placements as a pilot in September 2024</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Make <b>work experience</b> activity visible internally on technician webpages</p>	<p>Interns, Tech Managers</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Work experience opportunities are visible</p> <p>Ensure university outreach and engagement teams are aware of work experience activity and how it can be accessed</p>	<p>2</p>
	<p>In partnership with the university recruitment and outreach teams host technician led <b>outreach events</b> targeting young people to help change the perception of the University as a major employer of technical staff in the city.</p>	<p>People Services</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Host one event per year to engage with partners who can amplify our message about being the employer of choice in the city for technicians.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Promote <b>apprenticeship programmes</b> to young people through the relationship with North Tyneside Learning Partnership (NTLP)</p>	<p>People Services / Technical Leads</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Young people hear about the career opportunities and understand the entry routes for careers at Newcastle University via the NTLP</p>	<p>2</p>
<b>Strengthen the position of the University in the region in the region by contributing to apprenticeship end point assessments</b>	<p>Explore if suitably experienced technicians can deliver <b>end point assessments</b> of externally run apprenticeship programmes</p>	<p>NU apprenticeship leads / Technical manager</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>It is known if technicians can become end point assessors and what the qualification process is.</p>	<p>1</p>
<b>Explore if we can join up apprenticeship recruitment and delivery across the city</b>	<p>In partnership with the NHS, City Council and Northumbria university explore if apprenticeship recruitment <b>across the city</b> could be joined up and streamlined</p>	<p>Apprenticeship leads / people services</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>The feasibility of a city-wide portal that can be used to promote apprenticeships and to streamline recruitment is known</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Explore if <b>apprentices</b> could be co-hosted by <b>more than one employer</b> in the city or region.</p>	<p>Apprenticeship leads / people services</p>	<p>2026</p>	<p>It is known an apprentice can belong to more than one institution and how this may work in practice</p>	<p>1</p>